

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY (RMC)**

Monday, April 6, 2020

**Held at
TELECONFERENCE MEETING VIA ZOOM ADDRESS: <https://zoom.us/j/641172482> Or by
phone at 1-669-900-9128; Meeting ID #641 172 482**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Colonna called the meeting to order at approximately 1:36 p.m.

2. FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was recited by all who were in attendance.

3. ROLL CALL

Voting Members Present

Chair Frank Colonna
Ms. Gary Boyer
Ms. Liz Reilly
Mr. Denis Bertone
Mr. Ali Saleh
Mr. Roberto Uranga

Vice Chair Dan Arrighi
Ms. Margaret Clark
Ms. Joe Kalmick
Mr. Amanda Martin (for Secretary Crowfoot)
Mr. John Bishop (for Mr. Blumenfeld)
Ms. Sandra Massa-Lavitt

Non-Voting Members Present

Mr. Stan Chen (for Mr. Johnson)
Ms. Christy Suppes (for Mr. Bazmi)
Ms. Marisol Barajas (for Assembly member P. O'Donnell)

Mr. Julian Juarez (for Mark Pestrella)
Mr. John Walsh (for John Donnelly)

Members Absent

Mr. Matt Almy (for Ms. Bosler)
Mr. Sean Woods (for Ms. Mangat)
Vacant (for Senator Gonzalez)

Mr. Ed DeMesa (for Ms. Colloton)
Mr. Jerry Perez (for Mr. Moore)
Mr. Vincent Chang (for Supervisor Solis)

Staff Present

Mark Stanley, Executive Officer
David Edsall, Jr., Deputy Attorney General
Salian Garcia, Accounting Analyst
Marybeth Vergara, Project Manager
Joseph Gonzalez, Project Manager
Sally Gee, Project Manager
Arturo Gonzalez, Project Manager
Jennifer Fierro, Executive Secretary

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

5. Approval of Minutes

Board Member Reilly noted two typos in the meeting minutes and addressed them to Board Secretary Fierro. Corrections were made to the meeting minutes on April 7, 2020.

Minutes for February 3, 2020, were approved.

6. CHAIR'S REPORT

There was no report given.

7. DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL'S REPORT

There was no report given.

8. SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Mark Stanley gave a brief review of how RMC is responding to the Covid-19 Pandemic and stated RMC staff has followed all Stay-at-Home Orders and has found ways to adapt to the constant changes. He explained that he receives daily updates/orders from the Governors Administration website, for which the RMC responds to accordingly while staying in compliance with local orders as well. The RMC is still in communication with their grantee partners and intends to continue to manage their cases.

9. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

A. Legislative

Mark Stanley gave an overview and update on the current situation regarding Covid-19 and its affects on State and Federal legislative bills.

Mr. Stanley explained that while there is not a formal report to give on legislations, it should be noted that both the Assembly and Senate are serving from their District Offices due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Their return to Sacramento is still not certain based on recent updates. He stated two (2) items: Park District and the RMC Expansion would not make it into this session since they do not meet the current criteria addressing the Covid-19 crisis, but Mr. Stanley will continue to monitor the items. He explained that the focus at moment is on health issues and economic condition of the state.

Chair Colonna asked, if this was referring to the San Pedro/Catalina Island legislation? Mr. Stanley responded, yes.

B. Capital Outlay and Support Budget

Salian Garcia explained that the report contained information of the total capital outlay funds appropriated, encumbered, and remaining from propositions 1, 40, 50, 68, and 84 as well as Lower LA River and Compton Creek funds that were directly allocated to RMC from the relevant budget acts. The report reflects balances as of March 15, 2020. She noted that the report was more in-depth including information about projects encumbering funds from legislative investments, local assistance, and Lower LA River subgrant programs. The current amount available for encumbrance and expenditure is \$109, 235, 185, with two projects pending encumbrance. These two project grants for RMC19004, Shiwaka Urban Forest, and RMC19009, Lower LA River Pocket Park, have not been executed. Ms. Garcia stated the report includes Exhibit A "Support & Operations Budget for Fiscal Year 2019/2020; Exhibit B which outlines the advanced funds and shows no advanced funds received; and Exhibit C for the current contracts. She closed her review by stating that RMC is about 69% into the fiscal year and is below budget mainly due to large expenditures not being encumbered until the end of the fiscal year.

C. Cumulative Grant Project Status Summary

Ms. Garcia reported these are projects identified by funding source, Proposition 1, 40, 50, and 84 and reflects changes since June 2019. As of this date RMC has authorized 259 total projects, which consist of 201 completed projects, 44 are certified, 3 approved and awaiting encumbrance, and with the remaining balance of 11 withdrawn projects.

D. Project and Liaison Activities

Mr. Stanley gave updates about the various projects and activities for RMC.

Mr. Stanley stated that all 44 projects were being re-assessed at this time. RMC will continue to move forward by working with the grantees and aid them with any issues they are having with their supply chain and deliveries. One major issue that is anticipated is that RMC is moving into the fiscal year and funding for a select number of projects is coming to an end. Project Managers will review with the grantees the process of how they can move forward with their projects such as find allowances in the policies that could allow them to extend past the fiscal year.

Mr. Stanley referred to a picture on page 8 of the various volunteers who went out and help with the programing and maintenance for the Emerald Necklace Rio Hondo and Peck Park Water Conservation, RMC17015. He stated the volunteers visited the park on a quarterly basis and did a lot of implementation, operation and clean-up of the park. He wanted to recognize them for all their hard work.

Mr. Stanley then referred to a picture on page 9 for the 'Grand Opening' of the Phil and Nell Soto Park (RMC17018), which occurred this past February. He stated there was a heavy presentation from the Board at the event like Margaret Clark, Denis Bertone, Supervisor Hila Solis, as well as Federal and State Representation.

Board Chair Colonna thanked the Board for their presence at the various events they attend.

REGULAR CALENDAR

10. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING A GRANT AMENDMENT TO THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY FOR THE DUCK FARM PHASE IA IMPLEMENTATION (RMC3609).**
11. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING A GRANT AMENDMENT TO THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY FOR THE DUCK FARM PHASE 1A – STEP 2 PROJECT (RMC18002).**
12. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SAN GABRIEL AND LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY TO RATIFY A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT AND SERVICE ORDER WITH GEOSYNTEC CONSULTING TO PROVIDE CONCEPT DESIGN AND PERMITTING PRE-COORDINATION SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY CULTURAL ARTS CENTER IN SOUTHEAST LOS ANGELES (RMC19509).**

Board Member Bertone requested to have a presentation for the San Gabriel Mountains and Foothills Acquisition Master Plan at some point in the future as he would like to know more about it. Mr. Stanley responded that this project is in close relation with WCA so he can arrange a power point presentation for the Board.

Mr. Bertone motioned to approve this item. Mr. Boyer seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Roll call vote – Ayes = 11; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0

13. **CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING A PROPOSITION 1 GRANT TO AMIGOS DE LOS RIOS FOR THE MONROVIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT CAMPUS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (RMC19011).**

Joseph Gonzalez recommended that the RMC Governing Board approve a grant in the amount of \$609,693 to Amigos de los Rios (Amigos) for the Monrovia Unified School District Campus Green Infrastructure Development Project.

This application was received during a Proposition 1, Round Two Call for Projects that closed in December of 2018. He stated that some of the delay in approving this award was due to a wait for Amigos to complete a previous grant application for the Bassett High School which is another green infrastructure campus transformation. Amigos submitted their final reimbursement at the end of last year, he stated RMC is closing out that grant now. This current grant (RMC19011), would build from the work Amigos has done in the San Gabriel Valley to transform school campuses utilizing green infrastructure. He stated Amigos has been successful with these projects in the past and RMC has been supportive as these projects help disadvantaged communities where these school campus sites can sometimes be the only available open spaces for joint use by the community. This grant received a score of 110.9/132 or 84% utilizing RMC's Proposition 1 region wide criteria; it is also a grant for design and build so it will not only be for planning but implementation of the project as well. Mr. Gonzalez reminded the Board that Amigos is a non-profit organization that works to design, build, and restore parks and open space, and will partner with Monrovia Unified School District (MUSD) to provide quality water resources at Santa Fe Middle and Plymouth Elementary Schools in an underserved area of the City of Monrovia. He stated some key deliverables include planting 160 native and drought-tolerant trees and 900 shrubs around the campus perimeters and at key locations throughout the school sites, the grantee would remove water intensive grass species to allow for Bioswales, landscape planters, rain

gardens, rain barrels and infiltration areas that would be strategically installed to capture and infiltrate stormwater on-site. Mr. Gonzalez closed by stating if approved, this project will have a timeline of two (2) years with matching funds of \$142,100.

Clair Robinson, Chairperson for the Amigos de los Rios, was on call and presented the project site in the foothills which is a disadvantaged area in terms of the level of environmental screening. The two schools are in this area and both experience storm-drain issues with lack of service in that area for the bad flooding in the parking lots and inside the schools. She stated there is not very much greening at these schools, and Amigos made an inventory of all the drains to see where to concentrate their efforts as far as the bio-swells and rain gardens. Amigos has been in contact with the City of Monrovia who is interested in these kinds of green infrastructure transformation projects. There is also a great interest in part of both school Principals, School Boards, Head of Facilities, and the Head of Finance. She reiterated the great anticipation and excitement in part of all the groups involved in this project and thanked everyone for listening.

Mr. Boyer motioned to approve this item. Ms. Bertone seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Roll call vote – Ayes = 11; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0

14. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING A PROPOSITION 68 GRANT TO FROM LOT TO SPOT FOR THE LOWER LA RIVER POCKET PARK PROJECT (RMC19009).

This item was tabled.

15. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING A PROPOSITION 68 GRANT TO THE CONSERVATION CORPS OF LONG BEACH FOR DEVELOPING THE LAKEWOOD EQUESTRIAN CENTER AND SURROUNDING OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN (RMC19010).

Sally Gee introduced the project and recommended that the RMC Board approve a grant in the amount of \$2,024,020 to the Watershed Conservation Authority for the Duck Farm River Center Development Project.

She explained that this grant application was received during the Proposition 68, Call for Projects; it received a score of 85.5 out of a total 100 points or 85.5%. The Duck Farm River Center is an expansion of the Duck Farm River Park that is located along the San Gabriel River and is an essential piece of the region's Emerald Necklace Master Plan. This project would transform a 1929 Spanish colonial revival iconic farmhouse into a waterwise educational resource and visitor center for the public. The Center will include a platform for educational outreach and community activities with research materials, interactive features, and multilingual interpretive signage that will demonstrate and highlight practical strategies for water security and climate resilience, as well as the natural history of the river corridor. She stated that if funded, will fully realize the (RMC Prop 1 funded) Duck Farm House Landscape and Water Conservation Project to open a community resource and demonstration center which will incorporate two (2) acres of water-wise residential landscaping demonstrations for visitors to emulate in their own homes. This project gap funding is critical to complete the center and grounds, which together will encourage residents to retrofit high resource consumptive landscapes into functional sites that capture and conserve water using simple and aesthetically pleasing strategies. Ms. Gee noted that the majority of funds would go towards the exterior site amenities and house renovations

and that the budget would include construction contingency and other soft costs. Lastly, she stated this project will have a timeline of about three (3) years with an anticipated completion of March 31, 2023.

Debbie Enos, Executive Manager of WCA, thanked the Board Members who attended the Duck Farm Tour of Construction Site this past February 27th. She stated that the house renovations would be the next step in realizing the potential for this regional greenway along the river. She informed the Board that Project Manager, Jeremy Munns would answer any questions.

Board Member Reilly, noted that the grant request is originally in the amount of \$2,000,000, but the RMC Board is actually funding \$2,240,000; she asked what the extra amount was for? Mr. Munns responded that WCA received an updated budget which included current estimates which lead to the most current request.

Board Member Reilly followed up the question by asking if there was anything specific that attributed to the increase? Mr. Munns responded that there was nothing specific, it was mostly due to the increased estimates WCA received.

Ms. Reilly motioned to approve this item. Ms. Clark seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Roll call vote – Ayes = 11; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0

16. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT AMENDMENT TO THE GREATER LOS ANGELES AREA COUNCIL, BOYS SCOUTS FOR AMERICA FOR THE TRASK SCOUT RESERVATION WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT PROJECT (RMC18006).

Arturo Gonzalez reported on the project and recommended that the RMC Board approve a grant in the amount of \$1,996,380 to the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation for the Salazar Park Water Conservation Project.

Mr. Gonzalez explained that the county is seeking to replace a heavily used basketball court and grassy area with a Central Garden that includes native and drought-tolerant demonstration garden space replace existing impervious paving and basketball courts as well as water intensive turf with a collection of climate appropriate and native plant materials that have low water requirements. The Central Garden will also include a greywater irrigation system, which will divert stormwater from the adjacent community building roof to serve as irrigation for the garden space. The proposed project will create a demonstration garden space, walking paths, shade trees, seating and tables, and signage, and convert two existing parking lots to incorporate sustainable materials, including permeable paving and drought-tolerant landscaping. He explained this project site is located in unincorporated East Los Angeles which is a severely high needs and high-density area.

Board Member Boyer asked if the basketballs were being eliminated altogether? Mr. Gonzalez responded that they would be moved to the area of the tennis courts as that area is not so heavily used. He continued his presentation and noted that this grant would be in the amount of \$1,996,380 and that the County of Parks and Receptions would match funds with \$2,496,380. The majority of funds would go to moving the basketball court and moving the existing infrastructure and utilities as well as planting and landscaping in the parking lot. He stated this project would help mitigate the issues the park has with flooding, environmental issues, pollution, and water recharge. He ended by stating if approved this

project would have a timeline of 3 years 4 months from April 2020 to an anticipated completion by August 30, 2023.

Board Member Reilly noted that the original score was lower and then was readjusted, she asked what was adjusted? Mr. Gonzalez responded that after the original scoring there was an opportunity to speak with the grantee to look at what fields could be improved and after a second review, they were able to adjust the points to reach an acceptable score.

Board Member Kalmick asked that during this three (3) year construction bid, do they plan to keep the park open as much as possible? Mr. Gonzalez responded that he believes it should stay open as only really the basketball court and tennis court were being worked on, the rest of the park should continue to be operational.

Board Member Uranga asked if there were any planned construction ideas for the other facilities in the park? Mr. Gonzalez responded that he did not believe so; the only construction planned on the other buildings on site would be to add the rain catchers to reroute the water for irrigation.

Ms. Massa-Lavitt motioned to approve this item. Ms. Reilly seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Roll call vote – Ayes = 12; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0

17. CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING A GRANT AMENDMENT TO THE NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION FOR THE SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE FACILITATION AND SUPPORT PROJECT (RMC17024).

Salian Garcia presented the last item and recommended that the RMC Board approve a resolution to accept local assistance funds from Natural Resources Agency for Lower Los Angeles River restoration projects.

Ms. Garcia stated that as specified in the Budget Act of 2017, of ten million dollars appropriated for the Los Angeles County River Restoration Projects, seven million dollars (\$7,000,000.00) were appropriated for the multijurisdictional effort in developing projects along the lower Los Angeles River currently targeted for enhancement within the confluence area of the Rio Hondo River. She further stated funds will be used for some operations and maintenance priorities along the Lower Los Angeles river and more specifically its tributary area with the Rio Hondo River. These projects include the Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) Cultural Center and the relocation of Los Angeles Flood Control District maintenance yard at 5525 E Imperial Highway, with in the City of South Gate. Unlike previous general and local assistance appropriations, the funding could not be directly moved to the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC). Subsequently, the RMC will accept the general fund allocation for local assistance in the form of a grant or other encumbering instrument. This funding will be expended on development and implementation, including but not limited to feasibility studies, concept and schematic design, outreach activities, environmental assessments, contract management, construction, maintenance, programming and security. She noted that Planning for the Lower Los Angeles River was initiated by passage of AB 530, which established the Lower Los Angeles River Working Group and completed a Revitalization Plan. RMC, with the County of Los Angeles, is leading developing of the SELA Cultural Center in the City of South Gate, with other project partners such as LA County Supervisorial Districts, Public Works, Natural Resources Agency, and the

Department of Arts and Culture. She closed by stating funding would be appropriated in the form of a grant or other encumbering instrument as provided in the Budget Act of 2017.

Mr. Boyer motioned to approve this item. Mr. Uranga seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. Roll call vote – Ayes = 12; Nays = 0; Abstentions = 0

18. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no Board member comments.

19. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING DATE

Mr. Stanley announced the next meeting would be held Monday, May 18, 2020.

20. ADJOURNMENT UPON COMPLETION OF BUSINESS

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Colonna at approximately 2:53 p.m.

X

Frank Colonna
Governing Board Chair

X

Jennifer Fierro
Board Secretary